

REMARKS

Claims 1-18, 23 and 24 are pending in this application. Claim 2 is canceled. Claims 1, 13, and 24 have been amended. Please enter the amendments set forth above and the following remarks into the record.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the allowance of claims 18 and 23.

The Examiner objected to claim 2 as being dependent on the rejected base claim 1. Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the "plurality of membrane assemblies" from claim 2. Amended claim 1 should now be allowable. Claims 3-12 depend on amended claim 1 or one of its other dependent claims. Since each of these dependent claims contain all of the limitations of their respective independent claims, claims 3-12 should now be allowable.

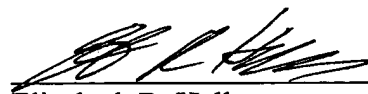
The Examiner objected to claims 13-17 as being dependent on the rejected base claims 1 and 3. Applicants have rewritten claim 13 to include the limitations of claims 1 and 3. Amended claim 13 and its dependent claims 14-17 should now be allowable.

The Examiner found that claim 24 was allowable if amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph. Applicants have amended claim 24 to overcome the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph; thus, claim 24 should now be allowable.

Applicants respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,
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